

COMMISSION FOR TEACHER PREPARATION AND LICENSING

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August 27, 1980

80-8102

TO: Deans of Education, Coordinators and Directors of
Vocational Education, District and County Superintendents
of Schools, and Credential Technicians

FROM: Peter L. LoPresti, Executive Secretary *Peter L. LoPresti*

SUBJECT: Course Work and/or Degrees Completed at Unaccredited
Institutions of Higher Education

This reminder stems from expressed concern of the Commission for Teacher Preparation and Licensing that academically unqualified and professionally unprepared applicants for credentials and permits be identified prior to their employment under Temporary County Certificates or other circumstances which would allow contact with students. This concern has been sharply focused by recent disclosures of allegedly fraudulent documents from St. Stephens' Educational Bible College.

Credit offered in satisfaction of credential or permit requirements must have been earned in institutions of higher education that are accredited by a recognized regional accrediting association.

Eligibility for credentials or permits may not be established on the basis of academic or professional preparation course work from unaccredited institutions of higher education, with the exception noted below:

"Appropriate undergraduate credit earned in an institution not accredited by a recognized regional accrediting association may be accepted as meeting undergraduate credit requirements for a California credential when the applicant has been accepted and is matriculated in a graduate program in a college or university which is accredited by a regional accrediting association for the advanced degree which it grants."

[California Administrative Code, Title 5, Section 80457 (d)]

The only regional accrediting associations that are recognized by the Commission are as follows: Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools; New England Association of Schools and Colleges; North Central Association of Colleges and Schools; Southern Association of Colleges and Schools; Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

An excellent source of information as to the regional accreditation status of institutions of higher education is an annual publication by the American Council on Education, entitled Accredited Institutions of Postsecondary Education. This publication is available in most public libraries, or may be ordered from:

The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation
One Dupont Circle, Suite 760
Washington, D. C. 20036

ATTENTION: Publications

(\$12.50 + \$1.00 for postage & handling)

Attached, for your information, is a copy of recent actions taken by the Commission in relation to unaccredited institutions of higher education in general, and St. Stephens' Educational Bible College in particular.

If you have any questions concerning these matters, please do not hesitate to contact the Commission.

Attachment

RECOMMENDATIONS APPROVED BY THE COMMISSION FOR TEACHER PREPARATION
AND LICENSING ON AUGUST 7, 1980

- A. Recommendations related to individuals who received a credential based on their St. Stephens Educational Bible College (S.S.E.B.C.) degree being verified by an accredited institution.
- (1) Procedures adopted by the Commission require that those individuals whose S.S.E.B.C. degree was verified by an accredited college and where such verification has been identified as probable fraudulent be afforded reasonable opportunity to explain the circumstances. Routine confidential letters of inquiry have already been sent to 18 such persons; and the remainder are in preparation.
 - (2) The Committee of Credentials will consider the explanations submitted by the credential holders; and if they are not satisfied, will instruct staff to issue a 30 day letter to each such person. The allegations will include the facts that (1) no course work or other bonafide academic or professional preparation was done; (2) that the evidence of admission to the graduate program of an accredited college was forged; and that both documents were submitted to the Commission for recordation in support of the application for the credential under penalty of perjury. These are substantial and adequate grounds for revocation of such credentials by the Commission.
 - (3) Because the facts underlying the issuance of credentials based on verification of degree by an accredited institution are substantially the same, the Attorney General's office has suggested that they be handled as a unit insofar as possible. This will permit consolidation of proceedings at the administrative hearing level with a substantial saving in costs and time.
 - (4) The Committee of Credentials may conclude that in addition to the Administrative causes of action for revocation that the facts warrant criminal prosecution for forgery or submission of false records to a governmental agency. In such cases, the Attorney General will be requested to take appropriate action, including reference to the District Attorney for prosecution.
 - (5) Because of the rule requiring 30 days notice, the earliest meeting of the Committee of Credentials at which these matters may be heard will be September 24-26, 1980.

B. Recommendations related to individuals who received a credential or permit based whole or in part on a degree or course work from S.S.E.B.C. and/or a degree from an accredited institution.

- (1) Although we strongly suspect that these individuals did not in fact complete actual course work at St. Stephens, we have no hard evidence in hand to prove the fact. We have reason to believe that the Office of Private Postsecondary Education will revoke the authority of St. Stephens to grant degrees on the basis that it has kept no student records. At that time we may be able to require re-submission of proof of actual course work.

C. Recommendations related to individuals with S.S.E.B.C. Affiliation seeking renewal, reissue or other credentials or permits.

- (1) Any person renewing a credential or permit which was originally issued on the basis of St. Stephens' work will be referred to Professional Standards. These persons will have to prove, to the satisfaction of the Committee of Credentials, that they actually completed the required work.
 - (2) Any person applying for the reissuance of a credential (including those under the Late Filing Fee Policy) which was originally issued on the basis of St. Stephens' work will be referred to Professional Standards. These persons will have to prove, to the satisfaction of the Committee of Credentials, that they actually completed the required work.
 - (3) Any person that holds a valid credential or permit which was based upon St. Stephens' work and applies for another (different) credential or permit will be evaluated without using any St. Stephens' work.
 - (4) All acceptances of course work completed in an unaccredited institution by an accredited institution will be authenticated by direct communication by the Commission to the accredited institution accepting the work.
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